EDU 221

Spring 2013

Curriculum Instruction Assessment (CIA)

FIAE Reflections – Chapter 2

In Chapter 2, of *Fair Isn’t Always Equal*, the author Rick Wormeli discusses the topic of mastery, and how teacher can identify the difference between true knowledge and understanding, versus recitation of facts, processes, and formulas. For Wormeli, this all comes back to the teacher. It is important that teachers have a clear idea of what it means for our students to have mastered a unit, or our content, before we can even begin assessment.

As a learner, particularly in my mathematics classes, I am becoming more and more aware of the difference between being able to repeat a process using path work, versus actual understanding of the material. Moreover, I have noticed that when I don’t yet understand the math behind the process I am easily frustrated, and unable to adapt to a problem presented in an unfamiliar format. Recognizing this, I seek out ways to develop my understanding in order to master it. As someone who loves mathematics, motivating myself to move past the superficial to real learning isn’t too difficult. However, this is unlikely to be the case with most of the students I encounter. If my students are going to be successful then, not only am I going to have to be clear about what it means to master the material, but also approach to teaching must uncover what is going on below the surface. Failure to do so, and I am likely to encounter a class full of frustrated students who are unable to adapt.